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THE HOUSE OF THE MARTYRS JOHN AND PAUL RECENTLY DISCOVERED ON THE COELIAN HILL AT ROME.*

[PLATES XVI, XVII.]

Of the many Christian monuments discovered during this century, especially in Rome, one of the most notable and precious, in the opinion of specialists, is the house, on the Coelian, of the saints John and Paul who suffered martyrdom under Julian the Apostate. It is now over three years since it began to come to light, through excavations made under my supervision, and since then its fame has been published everywhere.¹ This fame is not surprising, for the house of John and Paul, made sacred through their martyrdom and from the *confessio* erected there a few years after their death, is a monument unique both in Rome and elsewhere. In other cases, the early work has been more or less obliterated by mediæval restoration or decoration. But this monument preserves its original style and is, even now, almost as entire in its lower part as when the two martyrs lived in it and entertained devout pilgrims at the close of the fourth century.

* Translated from the Italian ms. by A. L. Frothingham, Jr.

¹ GATTI, *Bullettino della Comm. arch. com. di Roma*, 1887, pp. 151 *sqq.*, 321 *sqq.*; DE ROSSI, *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, 1888-89, pp. 68 *sqq.*, 89 *sqq.*; ARMELLINI, *Cronachetta*, Dec., Feb., 1888, April, May, June, 1889; LE BLANT, *Revue Archéologique*, 1889, p. 16, and *Acad. des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, Dec., 1887, pp. 466-71; ALLARD, *La science catholique*, Feb., 1888, pp. 177-90; BARING-GOULD, *Newberry House Magazine*, Aug. and Sept., 1889, pp. 165-76, 287-92; *Am. Journal of Archæology*, vol. III, pp. 481-2; IV, pp. 115, 455-6. There have also been notices in the *Bulletin Critique*, the *Civiltà Cattolica*, the *Römische Quartalschrift*, the *Bulletin of the University of Innsbruck*, etc., etc. : not to mention numerous paragraphs in daily newspapers.

This discovery having therefore excited so much interest, it appears as if the time had come for me to give a full and detailed description of what has hitherto been discovered, thus completing the fragmentary notices I have from time to time published in various periodicals, and answering the expectation of many who have been eagerly awaiting the publication of the monument.

I. THE MONUMENTS OF THE COELIAN.

The Coelian hill of the Eternal City, though now a desert, was in Roman times closely peopled, and was called by Frontinus (*De Aquaeduct.*, II. 87) a famous hill: *Coelius et Aventinus celeberrimi colles*. When Augustus divided the city into fourteen *regiones*, the second was comprised in the Coelian, and on it, from the beginning, the most select portion of the Roman patricians had come to dwell. As I am about to describe a large and magnificent house in this *regio*, it may be well to first take a glance at the entire hill and its principal monuments and thus become better able to estimate what place among them was held by the house of John and Paul. It happens that no part of Rome has been so little studied or explored. Yet, there is no lack of records regarding it: there are enough of them in the classics, in the regional catalogues, and in monuments dispersed here and there, to furnish the basis of a successful study.

The hill extends from west to east in a long sinuous line between the Esquiline, the Palatine, the false Aventine, and the walls, with a circuit of between 1200 and 1300 feet. Nearly all the present streets of its inhabited section follow the lines of the ancient streets. They branch off from two main trunks, the street now called *Via dei SS. Giovanni e Paolo* and *San Stefano*, and the *Via dei SS. Quattro Coronati*. They cross the *regio* from end to end and converge before the Lateran hospital, where the ancient line of the Servian wall passed, and where, in the opinion of many, was situated the *Porta Coelimon-tana* mentioned by Cicero and Livy.² The street of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, which skirts the south wall of the house of these martyrs, was called, by S. Gregory, *Clivus Scauri*.³ No ancient writer mentions such a street, but we know of this Scaurus M. Aemilius from Cicero,⁴ and from Asconius,⁵ who says that he had a house on the Palatine. He

² CICERO, in *Pison.*, ch. XXIII; LIVIUS, *Histor.*, lib. XXXIV. ch. 9; JORDAN, *Topograp.*, II; PRELLER, *Die Region*.

³ *Epist. XIII, Candido Ab.*, lib. VII.

⁴ *Orat. pro M. Aem. Scauro*.

⁵ *Comm. in orat. cit.*; MAZOIS, *Le palais de Scaurus*.

may have paved the street which then took its name from him. On the left side of the street, one of the façades of the house of the martyrs still stands almost intact with its portico and two stories of windows.

In the topographic catalogues we find distinct mention, on the Coelian, of the *Caput Africae*, the *Antrum Cyclopiæ*, the *Arbor Sancta*, the *Lupanarii* and the *Tabernola*:⁶ all these are certainly names of quarters or *vici*, but we are unable to identify them.⁷ In the *Caput Africae*, near the house of John and Paul, was situated the *Paedagogium puerorum Caesaris*, famous in many inscriptions,⁸ in which the imperial pages were educated for the various offices they were to hold.⁹

In the greater part of the higher streets of the Coelian, the rubbish from public and private buildings has but little raised the level of the soil, at least since the third century. Around the house of the martyrs the level is about the same as it was then, especially on the western side in the present botanical garden, where I have discovered, at a depth of only two decimeters, an external brick-pavement *a spina* and another internal mosaic-pavement, and, at a depth of 1.50 met., the virgin tufa.

The smiling slopes of the Coelian were adorned with many a rich temple and sacred shrine: such were the temple of Jupiter¹⁰ distinguished by the epithet *Coelimontanus*; ¹¹ that of *Minerva Capita*; ¹²

⁶ URLICHS, *Codex Urbis topographicus*, p. 2 *sqq.*

⁷ In regard to the *Caput Africae*, the excellent dissertation of Professor GATTI should be consulted in the *Annali dell' Istituto*, 1882, p. 192 *sqq.*; for the *Vicus ab Cyclopiæ*, consult GRUTER, p. DCXXI, No. 1.

⁸ *CIL*, VI, 5354, 5563, 7767, 8968, 8977, 8981, 8984, 8987, *etc.*

⁹ DE ROSSI, *Roma Sotterranea*, III, p. 292.

If Professor Gatti be not mistaken in finding the exact site of the *Paedagogium* in the present field of the Passionists, it is quite possible that we have the design of this important building in one of the fragments of the Capitoline plan. Long study and careful comparison have convinced me that the fragment on which is drawn the Neronian aqueduct with the title AQVEDVCTIVM (JORDAN, *Forma Urbis Romæ*, *tav. x*, No. 45) belongs to this part of the Coelian. Now, between the now-destroyed street of the *Navicella* and this aqueduct, where Gatti places the *Paedagogium* and where in fact was found the large base (now in the Capitol), with the dedication to Caracalla by the pedagogues of the *Caput Africae* (*CIL*, VI, 1052; FABRETTI, *Inscr.*, p. 296, No. 257; GATTI, *loc. cit.*), we see drawn a group of buildings which do not resemble either private houses or public monuments, but seem, on the other hand, to be well suited to a *gymnasium* such as was the *Paedagogium* on the Coelian (see PL. XVI).

¹⁰ MARTIALIS, *Epigr.*, lib. VII. 15.

¹¹ GATTI, *Bull. Comm. arch.*, 1887, p. 314.

¹² OVIDIUS, *Fast.*, lib. III, v. 857.

that of *Hercules Victor*; ¹³ that of Isis, ¹⁴ of the goddess Carna who presided over the guarding of the city-gates; ¹⁵ the shrine of Diana in the Coeliolus, ¹⁶ called by Cicero *maximum et sanctissimum*, ¹⁷ and many others, among which the temple of Claudius stands preëminent for position, size, and magnificence.

The secular rivalled the sacred buildings in number and splendor: such were the *stadia* for the circus and other games, of which the most noted were the *ludus matutinus*, the *gallicus* and the *dacicus*; ¹⁸ the martial field for the feast of the *equiria*; ¹⁹ the *mica aurea* for great banquets; ²⁰ the *thermae*; ²¹ the *tholus Caesareus* ²² or market of Augustus, one of the two great market-places founded in Rome as early as the first century, ²³ and many other similar buildings that it would be useless to enumerate. We have not retained a record of all the private houses on the Coelian, which are said to have numbered a hundred and twenty-seven, ²⁴ without counting the far larger number that were joined together so as to form distinct groups or *insulae*. ²⁵ Nevertheless, we can still, from the little we know, form an idea of the wealth of this hill in this respect. Julius Capitolinus is authority for the fact, that here was the palace of Verus, where Marcus Aurelius was born and educated. ²⁶ This prince so loved the Coelian that he would playfully call it "my hill:" *Mons meus Coelius*. ²⁷ Next to this palace were the *aedes Laterani* ²⁸ of the Plautius Lateranus who on his election to the consulate became an accomplice in the famous Pisonian conspiracy against Nero. ²⁹ Perhaps the Lateran basilica afterward rose on the site of this house. ³⁰

¹³ MARINI, *Arvali*, I, tav. 3, p. 30. ¹⁴ TREBELLII POLLIO, in *Tetrico jun.*, cap. 24.

¹⁵ MACROBIUS, *Saturnal.*, lib. I, c. 12.

¹⁶ CICERO, *Orat. pro Arusp. respons.*, cap. 11.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ MURATORI, *Inscript.*, p. DCXX, No. 2, p. CCCLVIII; GRUTER, p. CCCXXXV; ORELLI, p. 2554; SUTONIUS, in *Domitiano*, c. III.

¹⁹ PAULUS, in *Festo*, lib. XI; OVIDIUS, *Fast.*, lib. III, v. 519 sqq.; CATULLUS, LV. 3; FESTUS, in *Equiria*.

²⁰ MARTIALIS, *Epigr.*, lib. III. 55.

²¹ CIAMPINI, *Cod. Vat.*, 7849; DE ROSSI, *Bullettino*, v, p. 60; LANCIANI, *I commentari di Frontino*, p. 159; VACCA, *Memorie*, 22.

²² MARTIALIS, *loc. cit.*

²³ DION CASSIUS, lib. LXI, c. 18; ECKEL, *Doctrina num. vet.*, No. VI, p. 373.

²⁴ *Curiosum Urbis*; *Notitia*; ULRICH, *op. cit.*, p. 2, sqq.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ In *M. Antonino*, cap. I. ²⁷ *Epist. I Frontoni*, l. 2.

²⁸ JULIUS CAPITOL., *loc. cit.*

²⁹ TACITUS, *Annal.*, lib. VI, cc. 49, 60; AURELIUS VICTOR, *Epist.*, c. 20.

³⁰ For the remains of the *Aedes Laterani*, consult VACCA, *Memorie*, §120; BLONDI, *Roma restaur.*, lib. I, No. 85; NIBBY-NARDINI, I, p. 210; VENUTI, *Roma antica*, lib. I, 8; and the reports on the recent excavations made during the reconstruction of the apse of the Lateran Basilica.

The emperor Philip also resided on the Coelian, whom Eusebios asserts to have been converted to the true faith by his wife Martia Oracilia Severa, who openly professed Christianity.³¹ Pliny speaks of a Mamurra, a Roman *eques* and prefect of the blacksmiths of C. Cæsar in Gaul, who dwelt in *Coelimonte* and, following Cornelius Nepos, he makes a minute description of his palace, saying that all its walls were covered with marbles, and that it was ornamented with heavy columns of finest marble; and he adds that this was the first Roman house in which such marble incrustations were used.³² A leaden pipe belonging to this house was found not long since with the inscription: VILL. MAMVRRANAE. Cicero and Valerius speak of the *aedes* of one Claudius Centimalis on the Coelian.³³ That of Junius Senator is mentioned by Tacitus, who says that, when the *regio* was burned, only a statue of Tiberius which was within this building remained uninjured.³⁴ Lampridius and Julius Capitolinus refer to the *aedes Vectilianae ad Coelium montem*, in which the unfortunate Emperor Commodus sought refuge and was killed by Narcissus at the instigation of Martia.³⁵ Most notable for its historic associations was the house of the Tetrici, called by Trebellius Pollio a *domus pulcherrima*.³⁶ It was situated *in monte Coelio inter duos lucos*, opposite the temple of Isis.³⁷ The story of the two Tetrici, C. Pesuvius and his son, was represented, says the above historian, in a beautiful painting which, in his time, was still to be seen in the house. C. Pesuvius was one of the thirty tyrants who arose in the reign of Gallienus.³⁸ In the *regiones* of Panvinio³⁹ we find, registered on the Coelian, the house of the Parthians, *domus septem Parthorum*, perhaps the dwelling of those princes that were sent from Parthia to Rome as hostages, according to Tacitus. The exact location of all these houses is quite unknown to us. So it is with the house of the poet Stella, of Caesar, of the hymn-writer Claudius Cliptus (all mentioned by Panvinio), with that of the prefect Symmachus, of which he himself speaks in a letter,⁴⁰ and with the many others whose names have not come down to us.

³¹ *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. xv, c. 26.

³² PLINIUS, *Hist. Nat.*, lib. xxxvi, c. 6.

³³ CICERO, *Offic.*, iii; VALER., lib. viii, 2.

³⁴ TACITUS, *Annal.*, lib. iv.

³⁵ LAMPRIIDIUS, in *Commodo*, cap. xvi; JULIUS CAPITOL., in *Pertinace*, cap. v.

³⁶ In *Tetrico jun.*, cap. xxiv.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ AURELIUS VICTOR, *De Caesar.*, 35; VOPISCUS, *Aurelianus*, 31; TREBELLIIUS, *Trig. tyr.*, 23.

³⁹ NARDINI, *Roma ant.*, i, p. 186.

⁴⁰ *Epist.* xviii, lib. vii.

Better determined and more worthy of notice are the records of a number of notable Christians who dwelt on the Coelian: (1) the house of St. Clement, where this illustrious disciple and successor of St. Peter held the meetings of the first converts in times of persecution, and where, in the earliest years of the peace of the Church, was built the great Clementine basilica which was again brought to light not long since by Father Mullooly;⁴¹ (2) perhaps the house of the four martyrs called SS. Quattro Coronati, over which Pope Miltiades built in honor of these saints, early in the fourth century, the beautiful church which still remains;⁴² (3) the house of St. Faustus and that of St. Gregory, of which I will speak later; and (4) the house of the Valerii, contemporaries of SS. John and Paul. They were the descendents of the ancient Valerii Poplicoli, famous in the third century for nobility and greatness. About the middle of the fourth century, this illustrious family became Christian and left notable memorials of itself in the annals of church history. To it belonged Valerius Severus prefect of Rome in 382, a portrait of whom is the fine bronze found on the Coelian three years past with the inscription,⁴³ DOMINVS LEGEM DAT VALERIO SEVERO; also the sainted couple Pinianus and Melania junior, and several others, up to the fifth century.⁴⁴ In this house of the Valerii, there were built, at a later date, a free hospital, *xenodochium Valerii* or *a Valeriis*,⁴⁵ and the monastery of Sant' Eras-

⁴¹ MULLOOLY, *Saint Clement and his basilica in Rome*, Rome, 1873; DE ROSSI, *Bullettino*, 1863, p. 25 sqq.; ARMELLINI, *Le Chiese di Roma*, p. 191.

⁴² ARMELLINI, *op. cit.*, p. 571. It is DE ROSSI's opinion (*Bull.*, 1863, p. 27), that the houses in which the faithful gathered in times of persecution, when they were, after Constantine, changed to basilicas preserved the name of their former owner. In case this owner had received, after death, the honor of saintship, the basilica was consecrated to his or her honor and cult. In the early years of the peace, no church was dedicated in the name of a saint unless it contained the tomb or some other record of the history of the saint.

This observation may help others as it helped me in my discovery of the house of SS. John and Paul. In fact, the basilica of the SS. Quattro Coronati on the Coelian rises over the ruins of a Roman building which it would be well to explore.

⁴³ GARRUCCI, *Storia dell' arte cristiana*, tav. 469, 1, tome VI, p. 104; DE ROSSI, *Bullettino*, 1867, p. 27.

⁴⁴ DE ROSSI, *Bull.*, 1865, p. 45, 1873, p. 93, 1876, pp. 14, 54, etc.; *Inscript. Christ.* I, p. 150, No. 340; *Roma Sott.*, III, p. 720; *La casa dei Valeri*, 1886; TILLEMONT, *Mémoires*, x, pp. 592, 603, 823, XIV, p. 233.

⁴⁵ BIANCHINI, *Vitæ Pont.*, in *Leonem III*, sect. 408 from *Cod. Vat. Pal.*, 1811; DUCHESNE, *Lib. Pont.*, I, pp. 456, 482.

mus near the basilica of San Stefano, built under Pope Simplicius in the fifth century.⁴⁶

II. SURROUNDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF SS. JOHN AND PAUL.

In the midst of all these classic and Christian edifices, the house of Saints John and Paul stood out finely on one of the pleasantest sites of the hill. Turning from the triumphal way at the foot of the Palatine, it is reached after climbing, for about a hundred metres, the steep ascent of the Coelian. It forms of itself a block or *insula*, and is surrounded by three streets: one along the northern front, in the lower garden of the Passionists; another on the east, leading from the present square of the basilica toward the Colosseum; the third is still open, under the name of *Via dei SS. Giovanni e Paolo*. The names of the first two are not known, but their existence is undeniable since the investigations I have made; the third is the already-mentioned *Clivus Scauri*.

As soon as Nero had brought the *Acqua Claudia* as far as the neighborhood of the garden of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, as Frontinus relates,⁴⁷ this portion of the Coelian became one of the most notable parts of Rome. Innumerable buildings arose around the famous *nymphaeum* which this prince had erected to exhibit the waters, and to afford to the Romans a new and more accessible pleasure resort.⁴⁸ Through a hundred mouths, pipes, and canals, arranged in order on the surrounding walls, the waters fell most effectively⁴⁹ from the heights of the artificial hill which is in front of the Colosseum, rising to a height of a hundred and twenty-five feet from the natural level, where at present stands the large garden of the *ritiro* of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. Fountains placed below them received the waters and sent them up again in showers and streams, whence they were carried off through subterranean pipes to the Neronian pool near by, *ubi amphitheatri erigitur moles*.⁵⁰ When the Flavii destroyed the useless works of Nero, restoring Rome to herself and her citizens, as Martial says, the *nymphaeum* was not entirely abolished, and the charming play of

⁴⁶ DE ROSSI, *La basilica di S. Stefano e il monastero di S. Erasmo*: Roma, 1886.

⁴⁷ *De Aquaeduct.*, I, 20; II, 76; LANCIANI, *I commentari di Frontino*, p. 153 sqq.

⁴⁸ CANINA, *Indice topografico*, p. 73.

⁴⁹ NIBBY, *Roma nel 1838*, I, pp. 6, 58; CANINA, *loc. cit.*; LANCIANI, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

⁵⁰ MARTIALIS, *De Spectac.*, Ep. II. The last remains of these fountains were excavated, on the site mentioned, in the time of Pius IV: see VACCA, *Memorie*, 22.

the *Acqua Claudia* continued, at least in part, in front of the house of our martyrs. The same may be said of the buildings which, restored to nobler use, continued to adorn the declivity around the house within the entire radius now occupied by gardens and vineyards.⁵¹ The Flavian amphitheatre was erected in the place formerly occupied by the pool, and, on the heights of the hill, Vespasian erected the temple of Claudius already begun by Agrippina and destroyed by Nero.⁵² In this way, the house of SS. John and Paul found itself in front of and almost contiguous to one of the greatest temples of pagan Rome, the *Claudium*, which with its *cella* and porticoes⁵³ occupied a rectangular area of three hundred and eighty-five square feet.⁵⁴

The grotto of the Neronian arches which discharged the *Acqua Claudia* was lengthened under Septimius Severus and Caracalla by another series of arches going from the *Claudium* to the Palatine.⁵⁵ These new arches were built along the road that passed by the north side of the house of the martyrs, in front of which they formed a new magnificent façade opposite its main entrance. They begin on the front of a grandiose monument which there extends from south to north on the right bank of the street that leads to the Colosseum. It consists of two superposed rows of arches built of large masses of travertine of a rich design in bosses, with cornices and friezes which are purposely left rough in their outlines and finish. The lower row is now entirely buried, through the raising of the level at that point where the hill falls abruptly toward the plain; eight arches remain above ground, two of which are half destroyed and covered up by modern constructions. Each has an opening of about three and a half metres and a height of nine metres from the ground to the upper moulding of the cornice (PL. XVII).⁵⁶ Several opinions, more or less arbitrary,

⁵¹ That what is here stated is true, has been proved by several excavations which I have here made. This may be deduced from the following inscription (*CIL*, VI, 1728, b): FL. PHILIPVS. V. C. PRAEFECTVS VRBI | NIMPHIVM. SORDIVM. SQUALORE-FOEDATVM. ET | MARMORVM NVDTATE DEFORME. AD. CVLTVM | PRISTINVM. REVOC-CAVIT.

⁵² SUTONIUS, in *Vespasiano*, cap. x.

⁵³ MARTIALIS, *loc. cit.*

⁵⁴ AURELIUS VICTOR, *De Cæsar.*, cap. ix; CANINA, NIBBY, *loc. cit.*; JORDAN, *Topograp.*; PRELLER, *Die Region.*; etc. A portion of the plan of this temple is designed on one of the fragments of the Capitoline plan (JORDAN, *Forma urbis Romae*, tav. x, No. 45).

⁵⁵ LANCIANI, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

⁵⁶ NIBBY, in his *Roma nel 1838* (I, 658), refers to a third row of arches placed above these two. I cannot say whence he derived such information. It is certain that no trace remains of another story in this monument, which may be regarded as complete as it stands, for its two tiers of arches are architecturally symmetrical.

have been held by archæologists regarding this monument.⁵⁷ In my opinion, it is nothing else than the terminus of the Neronian arches mentioned above. As this aqueduct was the only one built above ground within the city, there was every reason for giving it such a façade at the place where its waters were discharged.⁵⁸

Nothing can be said of the buildings that adjoined the house of SS. John and Paul on the side facing the Palatine, both because there is no mention made of them in classic writers and because the remains which I have uncovered there are too fragmentary to serve as a basis for conjecture. Such, however, is not the case with the side by which the *Clivus Scauri* passes. There was the paternal home of St. Gregory. It is well known that this descendent of the Anici, despising the vanities of the world, retired in the flower of his years to live a solitary life in a monastery built by him in his own house, of which records and remains still exist.⁵⁹ Somewhat further up and immediately opposite the house of John and Paul are still standing notable remains of a public building which all architects agree in considering the *Mansiones Albanae*,⁶⁰ or the barracks of the soldiers that formed the regular garrison of the Alban mount.⁶¹ The building extended, on one side, to the Servian wall, on the other, up to the house of St. Gregory and above up to the square of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. To it belong, apparently, the arched niches, eight or more of which are still to be seen on the square itself, similar to those frequently found in large Roman constructions like the Palace of the Caesars and in several places on the Coelian itself. The house of the martyrs was joined to the above building of the *Mansiones Albanae* by means of high galleries with a double arch like those found in the recent excavations of the Roman Forum on the *via nova* under the Palatine. Two of these flying galleries still remain in part (PL. XVII), the other intermediate ones that now exist have been several times repaired and made over

⁵⁷ For example, in the cited works of NARDINI, NIBBY, and CANINA, whose conjectures have passed as certainties in the greater part of modern guide-books of Rome.

⁵⁸ The *specchi* which I found above these vaults and the adjoining tanks or *piscine*, the direction of the Neronian arches toward this monument on one side and that of the Severian arches on the other, come in support of this assertion, which agrees with what FRONTINUS says, *De Aquaeduct.*, I. 20; II. 74.

⁵⁹ JOHANNES DIACONUS, *Vita S. Gregorii*, lib. I; S. PETRUS DAMIANUS, *Opusc.* XIX; GIBELLI, *Memorie storiche della chiesa dei SS. Andrea e Gregorio*: Siena, 1888, §1.

⁶⁰ ULRICH, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁶¹ NIBBY-NARDINI, *op. cit.* I, p. 202; CANINA, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

in the Middle Ages. A second military station, also contiguous to the house of the martyrs, existed next to the one just described in the grounds of the present *Villa Celimontana*. Its real site was shown by the two important bases found there in 1820. It was the station of the fifth cohort of the Vigili, which was placed there to defend the Coelian and the neighboring region of Porta Capena.⁶²

For the sake of brevity, I shall abstain from any further considerations, for enough has been said to serve the purpose of showing what were the surroundings of the house of SS. John and Paul. Although this house was not situated on one of the highest points of the hill, its unusual size and isolation made it command the surrounding buildings. Its height, of about 15 metres above the street, gave an enchanting view. Below, rose the palace of the Caesars as a second miniature city on the little Palatine mount; to the right, a part of the Forum with its majestic temples and splendid porticoes; the Capitol, the Colosseum, the baths of Titus and of Trajan, and the numberless buildings of the Esquiline, on the north. Eastward was the temple of Claudius, high up on the hill, surrounded by a forest of columns, the buildings of the *Caput Africae*, the circuses, the shrines, and the military stations. Then, southward, as the hill slopes down to the valley between the Esquiline and the Aventine, the eye wandered over houses and palaces, over the walls of Aurelian, along a broad horizon limited by the Latin hills; the Ostian, Appian, and Latin ways, rich with gorgeous tombs, lined the valley below, filled with numberless patrician villas in the midst of beautiful gardens and parks. But, of all this, nothing now remains but ruins and a desert and some modern structures. Alone, the house of SS. John and Paul still stands as a remnant of the by-gone splendors of the Coelian.

III. HISTORY OF SS. JOHN AND PAUL, AS CONNECTED WITH THE HOUSE ON THE COELIAN.

Historic and archæologic documents unanimously inform us that John and Paul lived in the middle of the fourth century from the reign of the great Constantine to that of Julian the Apostate. Their *gens* is unknown, for their birth-names have not been preserved, but only their Christian name or *agnomen* which, according to custom, they probably received at the time of their baptism.⁶³ It is certain

⁶² *CIL*, VI, 1057. KELLERMANN, *Vigilum roman. latercula duo coelimontana*: Roma, 1835.

⁶³ THEODORETOS, *Serm. VIII in fine*; EUSEBIOS, *Hist. Eccles.*, c. XXV; CHRYSOSTOMOS, *Hom. XXI in Genes.*, *Hom. de S. Melet.*, *Con. Nicen.*, can. XXX.

that they were persons of much importance and high repute at the imperial court in the time of the Constantines. It would seem that they at first followed a military career, in which they were very successful, and were then admitted to the imperial court as high officers: *olim romulei servantes moenia regni, Barbaricos strarunt saepe mucrone globos*, as Florus of Lugdunum⁶⁴ writes; and as we read in an antiphony of the ancient liturgy: *sub Constantino Augusto militantes, fidem Christi suscipere meruerunt*.⁶⁵ In the paintings that were made of them in various times and places, they are always represented in military garb, and hence came the usual opinion of the vulgar, that they were never anything but soldiers. However, in a fresco found in their house, they are dressed in the palatine robes of officers of the palace, such as were worn in the Byzantine period.⁶⁶ When, in 330, the imperial court was transferred to Byzantium, it is to be supposed that the two illustrious courtiers followed their prince to the new capital and remained there more or less regularly at their post up to the accession of Julian. This opinion is made almost a certainty from the sum of the facts recounted in the *Acts* of these martyrs, and because we know that Julian, after having been saluted emperor, never again set foot in Rome. Among the many *amphorae* for private use found in the house on the Coelian, there is one of singular importance for the signs upon it, which show that it contained wine from Greece and that the sender was a Christian. Comm. De Rossi, in illustrating this object before the Academy of Christian Archæology, asserted among other things that the fact, that this wine came from Hellenic lands and from Christian property, would lead to the belief that the two saints owned landed property in the East:⁶⁷ this is a further argument in favor of their establishment in the East.

However this may be, it is certain that, after Julian became emperor, Paul and John retired to private life in their house on the Coelian. It is not known how they came to own it, or when they first began to live there. To judge from its position, so near to the Palace of the Caesars, it is to be conjectured that their position at the imperial court obliged them to choose a dwelling in this vicinity, and that this happened while the court was still in Rome. Nor is it

⁶⁴Ap. MABILLON, *Analecta*, t. I, p. 402.

⁶⁵Cf. MAZOCCHI, *Calend. Neapolit.*, t. III, p. 725, No. 499.

⁶⁶DE ROSSI, *Roma Sott.: Il Cimitero di Generosa*, p. 659; *Bullettino*, 1869, p. 7.

⁶⁷DE ROSSI, *Bullettino*, 1888; *Conferenze*, Feb. 1889.

improbable that this house belonged to the Palace, as did all this part of the Coelian in the time of Nero and his *Domus aurea*. Or, judging from the great size of the building, it may have been the private palace of the princess Constantia, to whose special service John and Paul were attached; and she may have left it by will to these faithful ministers as a reward for their services. The house itself, as I shall shortly demonstrate, was of ancient plan, modified and restored several times during the third and fourth centuries. The religious paintings with which it was decorated in about the middle of the fourth century show that already at that time it was inhabited by Christians, that is, by our martyrs. This is a proof all the more beautiful that it is so rare (not to say unique) to find a private Roman house adorned, like a church, with religious compositions.

It is not my intention to discuss in this place the intricate question, so much disputed, of the Constantia named in the *Acts* of SS. John and Paul, in order to decide who this princess was. I will only say, with Comm. De Rossi,⁶⁸ that she is not the Constantina of the basilica of Sant' Agnese on the Via Nomentana, nor is she one of the daughters of the emperor Constantine, but is one of his descendants, probably a niece on the side of Hannibalianus or Gallus, the successive husbands of his daughter Constantina. In support of the truthfulness of the above-mentioned *Acts* that speak of Constantia, a fact should here be adduced from one of the paintings in the house on the Coelian. It is a fresco, of the close of the fourth century, which represents a composition with six figures. Of these the principal are two young men standing on either side of a noble damsel, richly robed and of noble presence: De Rossi recognizes in them John and Paul and the princess Constantia: *cum quibus Augusto radiat Constantia serto*,⁶⁹ as sang Wandelbert, a writer of the ninth century.⁷⁰

Neither is it my intention to enter into an examination of our present text of the *Acts* of SS. John and Paul, either for the purpose of extracting historic information or for deciding on their value from the critical standpoint. They include, however, a side that must be touched upon, as it is connected with what forms the greatest inter-

⁶⁸ DE ROSSI, *Mosaici: Il Mausoleo di S. Costanza*.

⁶⁹ *Martyrolog. ad diem 26 Jun.*

⁷⁰ DE ROSSI, though previously prejudiced against the authenticity of the *Acts* in so far as they refer to Constantia, as soon as he saw this painting was converted to the above interpretation.

est of these discoveries on the Coelian. We have found in the house of John and Paul not only an archæologic monument of the first order but a luminous proof of the truth of Christian traditions and historic reminiscences. According to Tillemont and his followers, these *Acts* are a tissue of fables, a contemptible legend of Byzantine times. Such criticism is now shown to be false. The monuments, discovered after more than fourteen centuries of oblivion, correspond perfectly and in every detail to the description in the document. Furthermore, surprising as it may seem, it was possible, by following the indications of this document, to conduct the excavations by *a priori* knowledge, in search (1) of the *aedes* on which we read that the *titulus Pammachii* was erected ; (2) of the *cella* in which the confessors of Christ were surrounded at night by the soldiers of Terentianus and put to death ; (3) of the ditch in which their bodies were carefully hidden by their butchers ; (4) of the *confessio* made on the site by Byzantius ; finally, of the tomb and the traces of the three contemporary martyrs, Crispus, Crispinianus, and Benedicta. With this document as a guide, I succeeded in finding, one by one, all these precious remains spoken of in it : a document held to be worthy of little faith if not totally spurious. And so the discovery of the house on the Coelian may truly be called a triumph of historic truth and of the traditions of the Roman Church.

It would be out of place in this article to attempt to show minutely the correspondences between the *Acts* and the monuments discovered. Thus, in the *Acts*, it is said, that secrecy having been enjoined regarding the place where the bodies of John and Paul had been placed, Crispus, Crispinianus, and Benedicta sought for them diligently and in anguish of spirit, and when they had found them *intra parietes aedium*, they would come to venerate them and pray at the tomb. Now, in the monument itself, there are three paintings, dating from the close of the fourth century, placed next to one another on three separate walls, which reproduce this story with singular naturalness. In the *Acts* it is added that the satellites of Julian, having heard of the fact, ordered the capture of the three bold Christians who were caught *in flagrante* on the spot, and were condemned to pay the penalty with their heads. In the monuments, by the side of the three above-mentioned frescoes, are two others, painted at the same time, which represent to the life this arrest and this martyrdom in its most minute details. One of these details is, that the bodies of the martyrs are ignominiously cast to the dogs. This also is represented by the

Christian painter a century before the *Acts* were written. This passing mention is sufficient for the present purpose, and a minute description of the paintings will be given in its place when the *confessio in aedibus*, to which they belong, is spoken of.

A few words may now be said of the way in which the discovery of the house of SS. John and Paul took place. It was not made by chance, as is usually the case. It was my intention to write some historico-archæological memoirs on the martyrs of the Coelian and their basilica. A study of the subject at once showed me that the saints inhabited this declivity of the hill, and that the basilica rose over their house. At first, it was my opinion that little or nothing could have remained of the building, as is unfortunately the case with all the other *memoriae* known to have been erected in *aedibus sanctorum*. I wished, however, to be certain of the facts, and, having noticed that the level of the street was in great part lower than that of the interior of the basilica, I began to hope that in this difference I might find some remains of the house. In March 1877, I let myself down into one of the tombs made below the pavement of the basilica near the high altar, dug around in the earth and bones, and found traces of paintings that had all the characteristics of the art of the fourth century. Being encouraged by Comm. De Rossi, to whom I communicated my discovery, I proceeded to transport the bones to another spot in the church, and cleared the tomb of earth, demolishing all the modern additions made to convert it to such use. After a month's labor, I had opened up an entire chamber, covered on three walls with frescoes of the period mentioned. From this chamber I passed, by a passage which I discovered, into another, then into a third and so on. All the rooms that are placed on the main axis of the *domus* were filled with well-trodden earth up to the top and on their crushed vaults rested the mosaic-pavement of the basilica. This made it a matter of great difficulty to empty them without injuring the church above. But this was finally accomplished, and now more than one-half of the *aedes* which was enclosed within the perimeter of the basilica is unearthed and accessible. This part of the monument is what will be described in this and successive papers. The excavations are still continuing, and new discoveries are being made, but the main and historic part of the building is already opened up, and future additions cannot change the archæological data which will here be given.

IV. PLAN OF THE HOUSE.

Two main classes of houses were distinguished by the Romans: the *domus privata*, that served as a dwelling for the owner or for a family; and the *insula*, which was either several houses joined together or several apartments suited to the use of several tenants. The noble and well-to-do classes usually lived in a private house or palace, while the common people, on the other hand, used to a life entirely in the open air, rented some rooms in an *insula* and were satisfied with very modest accommodations. The Coelian house inhabited by SS. John and Paul, who were illustrious and wealthy, was a *domus* owned by them, though from its size and from being surrounded on all sides by streets it looked like an *insula*.

Although differing in dimensions, in the number and arrangement of the rooms, according to the wealth of the owner or the conditions of the ground, Roman houses were usually modelled on a similar plan determined by architectural prescriptions and special laws then in vogue. The *prothyrum* or entrance-hall led from the street to a large rectangular *atrium*, covered only along its sides by a roof supported by columns or piers: this was the *compluvium*, in whose centre was a marble basin, the *impluvium*, to receive rain-water. To the right and left of the portico were arranged a number of *cubicula* or rooms for various domestic uses. At the end was the *tablinum*, the principal room in every Roman house, which served as a reception-hall. It was open at both ends, so that it was possible, from the street, to see through the whole house from one end to the other, across the *tablinum*. Behind this hall was a second *atrium*, always present in houses in the least comfortable (even when the first was wanting), called the *peristylum*, from the colonnade that encircled it. This constituted the internal portion of the house. Along its covered sides were arranged the chambers in which the family lived: the bed-chambers, *cubicula nocturna et diurna*; the *triclinium* or dining-room; the *pinacotheca* or picture-gallery; the *conclavi* or halls reserved for the especial use of the owner, *etc.* Fountains and gardens usually adorned the peristyle, which was considered the pleasantest part of the house. Such a model is followed in nearly all the houses of Pompeii. It is followed in the house on the Coelian, although its plan was several times modified during more than a century, and especially during the time of the martyrs. The Romans had this peculiarity, that,

unless it were impossible to do otherwise, they never demolished the old when they built the new, but left it and sought to unite the two. It is astonishing to see so often, in Rome as in the province, several kinds of construction in the same building, the different periods of which are evident. Three such periods are manifest in our Coelian house: that of the end of the second century; one of the third and fourth centuries; and one even of the fifth and sixth, after the house had been changed into a basilica. These modifications affected the original plan considerably, which also remains, in part, uncertain, owing to the incompleteness of the excavations.

The main entrance, on the outside, the *ostium*, *prothyrum*, and *compluvium* with the annexed buildings, are where at present stands the lower field of the Passionist *ritiro*, in the space between the municipal *palestra* and the new chapel of San Paolo della Croce. I have already said that two streets passed at this point, one along the west side of the *Claudium* toward the Flavian amphitheatre, the other, from the *Claudium* to the Palatine, along the line of the Severian aqueduct. The entrance of the house opens on the latter street. I have not uncovered but have merely investigated this front half of the building, the whole of which is outside the perimeter of the basilica. Only a few vestiges of it remain, disturbed by the work undertaken here during the last fifty years. Some beautiful polychromatic mosaics were found here, some of which were destroyed, others were again covered over. More than one-half of the peristyle, also, is lost, that part outside the basilica. The columns of both *atria* are probably the same that were used in the construction of the basilica, and still stand where Pammachius placed them. They are of black granite, a little over four metres in height, with a diameter of 50 centimetres. For a large basilica with three naves, at least twenty metres high, columns of such small dimensions must have appeared out of all proportion, as they certainly are; but the pious founder, in erecting the church within the dwelling of the martyrs, may have preferred to pass over architectural proportions in order to put to such use the columns that were associated with the place. A similar use was made of all the other decorative marbles of the house.

The remaining part of the peristyle is to be found within the area limited by the altar of S. Saturninus and that of S. Pammachius, under the left nave of the church. Investigations on this spot have made

this certain, but the site is still filled with rubbish. Consequently, of the entire house only the inner chambers have been preserved in good condition, those which are situated behind the peristyle. Fortunately, this was, so to speak, the heart of the house, the part in which the owners dwelt. This is clear from the arrangement of the rooms mentioned above as on the axis of the building, and from their rich decoration of mosaics and frescoes; whereas all the others of which there is any trace are not only without decoration but are of an inferior quality. The same may be said of the other adjacent rooms on the same floor, which will be described in another place.

That part of the house which I term the *parte nobile*, and which is in the rear of the peristyle, consists of five parallel rows of two chambers. In the third and central row is the *tablinum*, about six metres long by five in width. A large arched opening leads from it into the internal *atrium*, and another similar archway on the opposite side opens into a second smaller chamber or passageway. From this second room, which was open on the side facing the street, the *tablinum* received light and air. Two doors in the side-walls led into adjoining rooms. However the use of the *tablinum* may have varied, in successive periods, from its original purpose of containing the family archives, it was an indispensable part of every Roman house. In this case, instead of being placed in front of the *peristylum*, it is behind it, perhaps for topographic reasons.

Of the other rows of rooms one only has not yet been freed from earth. Thick partition-walls separate these rooms, which communicate by means of wide passages opened in the walls. Two of these rows have a simple archway instead of this division-wall. A glance at the plan on PLATE XVI will show the details of the entire arrangement.

The rhomboidal shape given to all these rooms of the *parte nobile* may appear strange, especially as the street itself is at right angles with the axis of the building, and therefore could not be the cause of this angular deviation. A careful examination of the PLAN will show that this deviation increases gradually from south to north. The first zone of the building near the *Clivus Scauri* is perfectly rectangular; the second is almost so on one side, while on the other it deviates slightly from the regular plan, from one end to the other; and, finally, the third bends so much at the *atrium* and in turning becomes so narrow as to violate all rules and proportions. The only explanation of this is, that,

before the house was reduced to its present condition, a second street passed along that side, obliging the builder to follow its line.⁷¹

The *cryptoporticus* or corridor that flanks the oblique side of the court is still paved with those polygons of lava which the Romans used for their public roads. This extends over a surface of two metres, which is the width of an ordinary street: beyond that point the pavement is of a different kind.

When the street was abandoned and the house was enlarged on that side, various modifications of the structure became necessary. There are still evident proofs of this fact. In the middle of the front wall of the old building, where is now the great opening which joins the *tablinum* to the court, there used to be a simple exit of small size. This was one of the outer doors of the house: the enlargement both in height and breadth dates from the fourth century. Besides this door there were no others that opened on to the street, from the *tablinum* onward at least; nor were there any in the opposite wall. It therefore became necessary, in order to establish communication between the first building and the new additions, to open two doorways, one in each wall. As these were found to be sufficiently strong, it was deemed not necessary to place over them architraves or arches, and this is enough to show them to belong to a date later than the building.

At about the same time, several other adjoining constructions were added to the house: of this there are still visible traces in the joinings which belong to the fourth century, whereas all the added parts belong to the third or even perhaps to the second century. It is easy to identify these additions, on the PLAN, as they all are built on an axis different from that of the house proper, just described; and, besides, their irregularity shows that they have nothing to do with the original plan of the house. The additions are distinguished on the PLAN by a lighter tint.

Back of the five rows of rooms that composed the *appartamento nobile* is a rectangular space four and a half metres wide and twenty-five metres long—the exact width of the façade of the house on that side. Within this enclosed space, which has been only partially excavated, six doors open onto the street often mentioned, the *Clivus Scauri*,

⁷¹ Pompeii offers, among a hundred others, an instance quite like this in the suburban villa of M. Arrius Diomedes. The so-called Street of Tombs, on which it is situated, runs obliquely to the axis of the building, which led to the adoption of the triangular form in which it is built: OVERBECK, *Pompeji*, 4th ed., p. 369.

each one of which corresponds to one row of rooms or to one of the passageways that lead to them. In the fourth century, division-walls were placed there at different points, in order to prevent passing through these doors. At first, however, this entire gallery was open, and looked like a long vestibule with doors that communicated with the inner rooms. Was this, then, the *prothyrum*, and therefore the place of the main entrance to the original house? If it were so, we should be obliged to regard it as of very small dimensions, as without peristyle or *atrium*, on account of the streets that circumscribed it. Any opinion would be but a mere conjecture. It can only be asserted, with safety, that at the time of SS. John and Paul the *domus coelimontana* had no entrance on that side, and the six doors, interrupted by walls, served but to give light and air. I was hence led to seek for the main entrance to the house of the fourth century at the point where I found it, namely, beyond the *tablinum*, outside the perimeter of the basilica.

The house therefore received light from the street on the south side, and on the north received it from other doors and windows which opened onto the inner court. After the works of the fifth century, however, all these openings were closed or were covered by two walls which were then built within the house itself, along its two sides, in order to place upon them the twenty-four columns of the church. Thus was the ancient building left within the perimeter of the new, and was cut into three parts, following the line of the three naves of the basilica: not only the light but all communication between the sections was cut off. These walls are given on the PLAN.

V. SECTION AND STRUCTURE OF THE BUILDING.

The house had two stories, or three including the ground-floor. To the ancient habit of preserving the old in raising new constructions we owe the preservation of the façade of these three stories at the time of the construction, in the fifth century, of the basilica *in domo sanctorum*. This façade is still visible on the left side of the street of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, and comprises the entire south side of the church. To the ground-floor belong the six great arched doors symmetrically arranged in a row as a *peristerus* or inner portico. Above them are two rows of windows, indicating the lines of the two upper stories. When these stories were destroyed in order to make way for the basilica, their outer wall was retained to become that of the church. The windows of the first story were closed, and those of the second story

were used as the clerestory of the basilica. Their tops only were destroyed in order to lengthen them and adapt them to their new use.

This example of a three-storied façade of an ancient house may be said to be the only one known. In Herculaneum something of the kind is seen in a small one-storied building;^{71a} and recently at Pompeii has been uncovered, on a hill-side, a house which appears to have had several stories; but such examples may be termed ruins or vestiges that have nothing comparable to the grandiose façade of our *domus coelimontana*. There were, of course, both in Rome and in the provinces, many higher and more magnificent buildings. We know that special laws were passed to keep within bounds the mania to raise houses to a great height.⁷² Partly from the too-rapid increase of the population, partly through private vanity, this abuse had become quite general, and Petronius wrote of it, *aedificant auro, sedesque ad sidera tollunt*;⁷³ and the rhetor Aristides could say, that all Italy could not hold the buildings of the immense city, if they were reduced to a single floor.⁷⁴ But all such buildings have been destroyed, and this one would certainly have suffered a like fate had it not been incorporated in the constructions of the basilica.

The height of the house from the street-level is about fifteen metres; six of which belong to the ground-floor and four to each of the upper stories. This height is in perfect architectural relation to the length of the building, which is about thirty metres. Without being at all rich in the display of marbles and decoration, the great façade on the *Clivus Scauri* is singularly fine in the arrangement of its parts and for its elegance, even since it was deprived of all ornament and reduced to the bare wall. In the drawing reproduced in PLATE XVII, I have confined myself to copying present facts, except in so far as I have left out certain arches built, during the Middle Ages, to support that side of the basilica, as well as some repairs executed from time to time. Neither is the façade continued in the drawing: it originally stretched eleven metres further along the same line up to the portico of the basilica, beyond the five rows of chambers which form the main section of the house. It is of different design and period. The windows in this part of the wall which, like the others, were closed in the

^{71a} COMPARETTI e DE PETRA, *La Villa Ercolanese di Pisoni*. The *Casa del balcone pensile* at Pompeii is an example of a two-storied building.

⁷² CICERO, *De lege agraria*, II. 35.

⁷³ PETRONIUS ARB., *Satyricon*.

⁷⁴ JUVENALIS, *Sat.* XIV; TACITUS, *Ann.*, VIII. 3.

fifth century, are of a single story and do not correspond in either form or level with the preceding ; and, besides, there is no exit of any sort on the ground-floor. It is easy to see that this outer wall belongs to the building which I mentioned above as having been added to the primitive building during the fourth century. That it is so, is shown by the plan on PLATE XVI.

The illustration of this façade will render a more minute description unnecessary. One further remark it is interesting to make : all the windows that remain intact, as are those on the first floor, had a wooden architrave under the brick arch or rather archivolt, and this wood still remains in place, in good preservation. This is not so remarkable, considering the great care taken by the ancients in their choice of wood for construction, and in their selection of the season for cutting it.⁷⁵ Flaminio Vacca relates, in the time of Pius V, that, in demolishing some walls of the Republican period⁷⁶ in the forum of Nerva at the so-called *Arco dei Pantani*, there were found dove-tailed wooden cross-bars used to bind together the large stone blocks.⁷⁷ In the Neronian port at Anzio, the beams of the foundations of the moles still remain, of extremely hard oak,⁷⁸ and just as well preserved was the wood extracted from the lake of Nemi known under the name of *nave di Tiberio*, which also belonged to foundations.⁷⁹ On the west side of our house on the Coelian, there remains of the façade all that part which serves as the end-wall of the basilica on either side of the apse, above the botanical garden. In the next chapter, I shall describe this side. The other two fronts have been either demolished or hidden by the ancient and modern constructions of the church.

Several staircases joined together the different apartments of the building. The main staircase was placed in the inner court at the entrance to the *tablinum*, on the left. There remains only a portion of it, consisting of fifteen steps, reaching as far as the level on which was built, at the close of the fourth century, the *confessio* of the eponymous martyrs. The traces of other steps on the two side-walls show that they continued in the same direction for some distance, in fact, as far as the story above, which was placed at least a metre above the level of the present pavement of the church ; so that there must have been at least twenty steps. They were made of stone from the

⁷⁵ VITRUVIUS, II. 9. 10.

⁷⁶ NIBBY, *Roma nel 1838*, I, p. 235.

⁷⁷ PACCA, *Memorie*, § 89.

⁷⁸ NIBBY, *loc. cit.*

⁷⁹ NIBBY, *ibid.*, p. 236.

Tivoli quarries (*pietra tiburtina*), and rested on a tunnel-vault constructed between two walls, with an almost uniform width of 1.70 met. Of these I have found only some vestiges, according to which I have sought to readjust the stairway in order to make it passable. Before the house was abandoned and filled with earth, pilgrims used it in coming to the *martyrium* of the saints John and Paul.

Another small stairway, under the preceding one, led from the ground-floor to the rooms added at a later date, near the peristyle. These being on a lower level, it was necessary to place some steps at the opening made at the point of communication. A third staircase, not more than a metre wide, led to another lower story yet to be described, and still another led by a different way to the upper stories. The two latter stories, not having yet even been excavated, are not represented on the PLAN.

A few words are now in order regarding the construction of the building and its different parts. As in the great part of constructions of the imperial period,⁸⁰ nothing but bricks are employed, sometimes red, sometimes yellow. The facing of the walls is good, and varied according to the various periods of construction and the requirements of the site. Nearly everywhere triangular bricks are used, with which are mingled, after a certain number of courses, the usual courses of square bricks commonly called *goloni*, which served to unite more firmly the facing with the inner mass of the wall.⁸¹ In the earlier walls of the second and third centuries, the facing is interrupted at regular intervals by rectangles of reticulated work made of small pieces of tufa cut in cubes and fitted together like wedges, giving a design resembling a network.⁸² This method of construction is known to have been introduced into Italy during the last times of the Republic, and to have ended with the early Empire. But, although these walls of the second and third centuries are of fine material and precise workmanship, almost all those of the fourth are of the worst kind of construction. In both, however, there is this peculiarity, contrary to general custom, that the facing begins, not at the pavement of the rooms but at the lowest foundations. The same artistic difference is noticeable in the arches: among those of a good period there are several of such fine construction as to equal the finest Neronian brick-

⁸⁰ NIBBY, *loc. cit.*

⁸¹ NIBBY, *loc. cit.*

⁸² VITRUVIUS, II. 8; PLINIUS, *Hist. Nat.*, XXXVI. 51.

work, while others, of later date, are astonishingly irregular and carelessly built.

The inner and outer doorways are of varying shapes and sizes. Some were topped with a round arch, others, I infer, with a low arch erected over a marble architrave. This inference is based on the sockets I have found in all of them, with evident marks of the chisel used to extract the marble when the house was abandoned. The thresholds also were of marble, as may be seen from a few that still remain in place. The form of the ceilings varies according to the different shape of the rooms: some are *a vela*, others have cross-vaults or barrel-vaults, the latter form being used in nearly all the halls that varied much from a square plan. With a few exceptions, all were covered with stucco, without any cornices or other decoration in relief or *incavo*; this flat surface being covered in the finest rooms with a frescoed decoration. The height of their imposts was in proper proportion to the size of the walls. Their height in the centre is, in all the rooms of the *parte nobile*, five and a half metres: in the rooms of lesser importance, there is a medium height of three metres.

In one place only have I found any indication of the flat ceiling, which is, nevertheless, of such frequent use in Roman architecture under the names of *coelum* (Vitruvius, VII. 3. 3) or *lacunar* (Cicero, *Tusc.*, v. 21.; Vitruvius, VII. 2. 2). I am not able to say how the building was covered, as no part of the roof remains. The common custom, we know, was to cover the most costly buildings with marble tiles and slabs, while the inferior houses had brick tiles, *tegulae* and *imbrices*.⁸³ In the heap in which were buried all the remains of the destroyed parts of the house, have been found a great quantity of marble fragments belonging to the first kind of roofing and none belonging to the second, though terracotta fragments of other descriptions have come to light in considerable quantity. This would lead to the belief, that the roof was certainly of marble. The Romans sometimes used terraces instead of roofs, as is now often done in Italy, in order to secure places for taking the air without leaving the house.⁸⁴ In our house, I have found traces of this custom, also, over a chamber which is now in great part destroyed, to which I shall refer later.

As already noticed, the use of marble decoration in private houses was introduced on the Coelian by Mamurra, who was the first to carry

⁸³ PLAUTUS, *Mil.*, II. VI. 2; TERENTIUS, *Eun.*, III. V. 40.

⁸⁴ SUETONIUS, *Nero*, XVI; PLAUTUS, *op. cit.*, II. IV. 25.

out this form of adornment in his own house. It was therefore to be expected that, in the noble house of SS. John and Paul, this custom should be followed. Traces of marble incrustations, friezes, and ornaments of all descriptions have been found here in great quantities, giving us a high opinion of the beauty of the interior décoration of the rooms. Unfortunately, these are but minute fragments of what was destroyed by ruthless hands. Slabs of all kinds, cornices, bas-reliefs, friezes, bands, squares, colonnettes, capitals, bases, *etc.*, all worked in the finest style, have been collected in great number on all the points where excavations were carried on—*carystium*, granite, alabaster, black and verd antique, *coralaticus*, *fugitivus*, porphyry, and a great variety of other kinds of rare marbles, known and used in Rome and mentioned by Vitruvius and Pliny, were used in tinting the rooms with their varied colors.

The majority and the best of the flat marbles were placed in the pavements. Among the Romans, the commoner floors were covered with broad slabs of well-polished terracotta or with bricks bound together with fine mortar and arranged like a fish-bone; it was called *opus spicatum* from its resemblance to an ear of corn. A second kind consisted of a simple layer of pebbles (*astraco*) and potsherds well pounded, called *opus signinum*. All three of these ordinary kinds were used in the house in certain crypts and cells for domestic purposes. In the next place came the slabs of marble, almost square in shape and of a single color, used in the simplest form of luxurious pavements. More than one hall in this house was paved in this fashion, as is shown by the regular imprints on the *astraco* left after the removal of the marbles. Elsewhere, use was made of a mosaic of pure white without decoration, called by Vitruvius *opus tessellatum*, from its rectangular cubes. The work of this description in our Coelian house is extremely careless and irregular in the arrangement of the cubes, showing it to have been executed in the fourth century. The porticoes around the peristyle, which have been only partially explored, were paved in this manner.

There were also in the building far richer pavements. Such were those of fine mosaic of geometric design in white and black, or in yellow, red and green, cubes; the *opus sectile* made of larger pieces of marble of various colors, cut in varied shapes. Serpentine, *palombino*, porphyry, white and yellow marbles, are the dominant kinds used in this house, as at Pompeii and elsewhere. The extraordinary number of

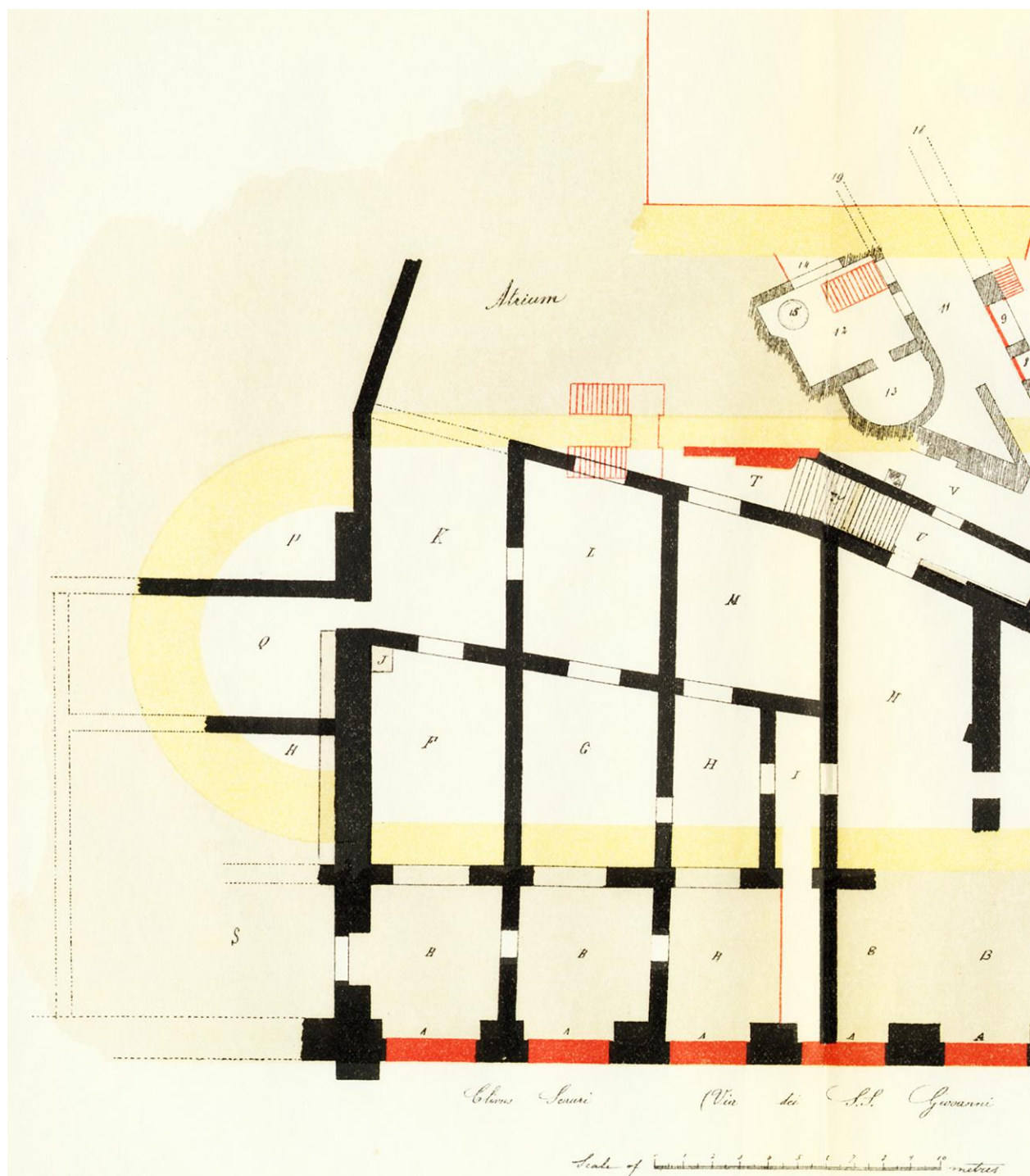
dispersed *crustae* or of more or less fragmentary groups of them, which have been found in the excavations, shows that there were many rooms paved in this fashion. Of the *opus vermiculatum*, or *musivum* properly so called, which depicted figured compositions, I have found no certain traces. I say that there has been no certain indication of such work, for, of the many pieces of this *opus* picked up among the ruins, and forming parts of figures on a ground of gold or of blue *lapis lazuli*, I am not able to decide whether they belong to the house of the third and fourth centuries or to the basilica of the fifth century.

This is sufficient to show that, in this respect also, the *Domus coeli-montana* was not inferior to the richest Roman houses of the day.

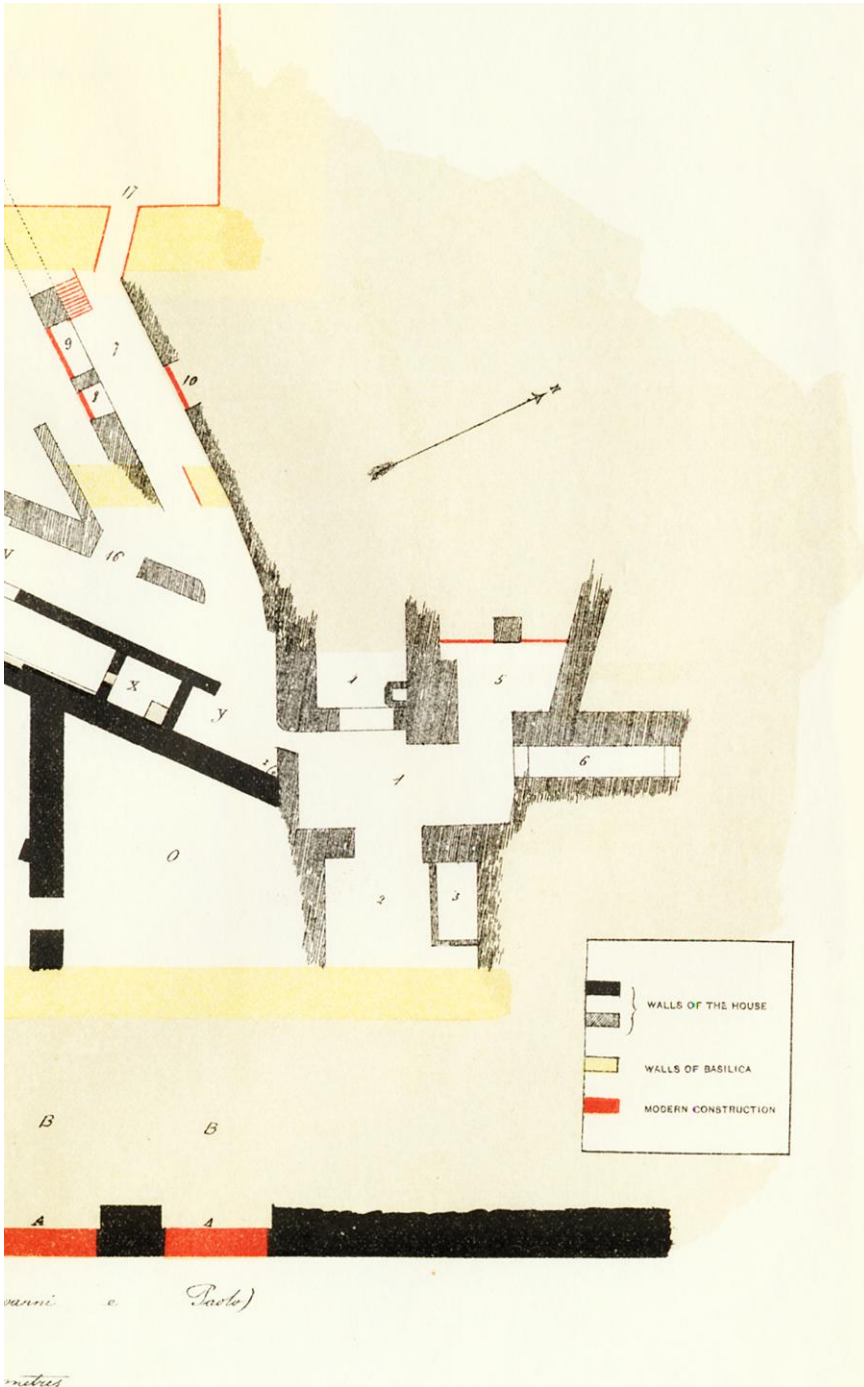
PADRE GERMANO DI S. STANISLAO, PASSIONISTA.

Convent of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Roma.

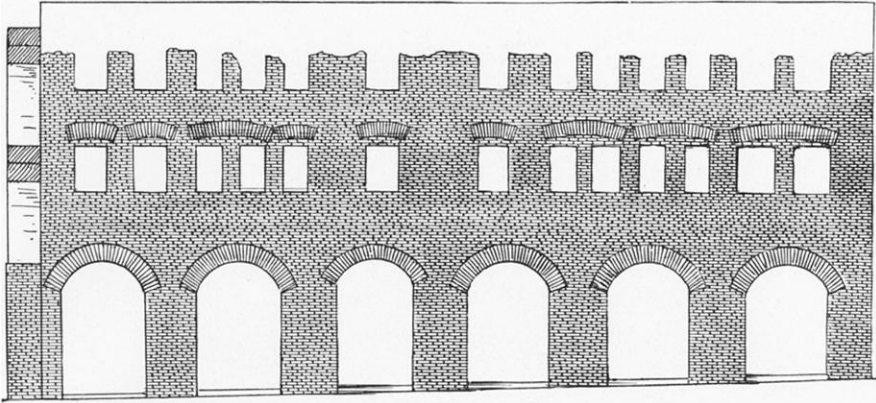
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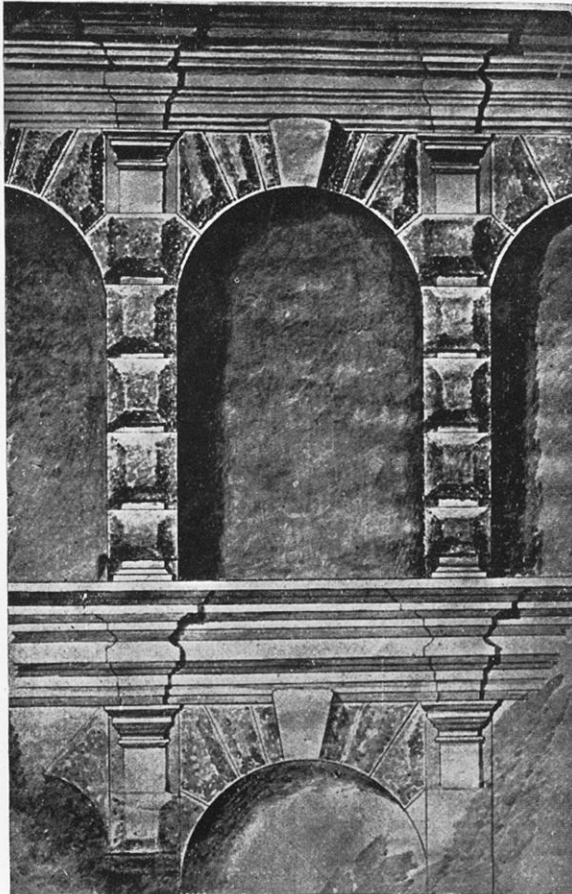
HOUSE OF THE MARTYRS JOHN AND PAUL ON THE COELESTIS



THE COELIAN.



Facade of the house on the Clivus Scauri.



Roman Arches adjoining the Claudium.